



# AdHoc 18

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

In AdHoc issue 18, we turn our attention to love and human connection. Maria Sherman talks about Indie Pop Prom, an annual concert she organizes around her birthday (and Valentine’s Day), and how she flipped the heteronormative high school tradition into a celebration of female artists. Matt Korvette—whose band, Pissed Jeans, is set to release a new LP called *Why Love Now*—muses about toxic masculinity, and how it’s time modern men learned to stop being assholes. Finally, Brooklyn-based singer-songwriter Vagabon, aka Lætitia Tamko, considers her agency to effect political change as both an artist and a citizen, within not only the musical underground but also the “real world”—two spheres that aren’t as different as they may seem. Their stories remind us that our communities are built on person-to-person interaction, and that engaging with and caring for those around us is a crucial step toward building the world we want to see.

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### Contributors

**Maria Sherman** is a culture writer and recent New York City transplant living in Philadelphia. For this issue, she wrote an essay about Indie Pop Prom.

**Samuel Nigrosh** is a Chicago-based illustrator who publishes books and comix under the name Trash City. He drew the illustrations in this issue.

**Salina Ladha** is a ceramicist, painter, and illustrator based out of Montreal, Canada. She made the art that appears on the cover of this issue.



# DIY Is Not All That Alternative

BY AMELIA PITCHERELLA



VAGABON'S LÆTITIA TAMKO DISCUSSES THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN  
THE UNDERGROUND AND THE REAL WORLD

A Cameroon native with a past working as a full-time software engineer, singer-songer Lætitia Tamko, aka Vagabon, has spent the past few years developing her songs through live performance, experimenting with solo and full-band versions of her sets, which are invariably intense. February 24 marks the release of the Brooklyn-based artist's first full-length, *Infinite Worlds*, on Father/Daughter Records, and Vagabon is set to tour in March alongside Allison Crutchfield.

On *Infinite Worlds*, Tamko blends the frank lyrical stylings and swelling guitar rock that marked her 2014 debut EP, *Persian Garden*, with lush electronic flourishes. In late January, she spoke to us over the phone about her music's evolution, and offered some thoughts on how DIY and the “real world” aren't always so different after all—at least when it comes to questions of inclusivity.

**AdHoc: The title of your record comes from a book of poems by Dana Ward called *The Crisis of Infinite Worlds*. What did you like about that collection?**

Lætitia Tamko: It was a really challenging read for me. His writing style is so particular. There are a lot of run-on sentences; I had to really comb over his poems to grasp even an idea of what he meant.

**I detect a similar affinity for strange repetitions and movements in your lyrics.**

It's funny—these songs were written before I read the book, but I was reading it as I was recording. It's one of those things that sticks with you, though.

**There are a few songs on *Infinite Worlds* that rework material from the EP. “Fear and Force,” for example, grew out of “Vermont II,” with dramatic shifts in sound. What informed your production decisions?**

“Fear and Force” was really fun to work with. Because I have grown so much as a musician and producer since releasing “Vermont II,” I think of them as two different songs, which is why I changed the title. The song has evolved as I have over the years—it's a testament to where I was and where I've gone.

**How do you feel you've evolved?**

I have a lot more technicality than I used to—and I've traveled around and toured a lot. I had to find ways to make these older songs feel exciting to me and to the audience. If I'm excited about a new arrangement, or a little thing that I added to an old song, it makes playing it feel new. I also learned to play new instruments and to use a lot of different production tactics. I had session players come in for some things, but it was really important for me to have my hand all over the record.

**You studied computer engineering in college, then worked as a software engineer for over a year afterwards. Would you say that background influences your music at all?**

I learned a lot from working with the engineer who worked on this record—Chris Daly in New Paltz, New York. There were lot of things I had learned in school that were tucked away in my brain, and I didn't know how they applied [to my music]. Watching him work, it was like, “Oh yeah, I know what a low-pass filter does, conceptually, so if I can think of it practically, then it can be of use to me.” In the first year of engineering school, you learn about all these waves—triangle waves, square waves, stuff that's all over synthesizers. That knowledge was in my brain conceptually, but I didn't know how to actualize it into a practical thing. A lot of the time, it was just me and Chris in the studio. Watching each other do our own thing was really helpful in tying up those two worlds for me.

**You went on tour with Sad13 this winter, and you'll be touring again next month. You've talked about how physical space factors heavily in your songs. Were there any places that particularly resonated with you on tour?**

This last tour was interesting, because I felt like I lived in a

lot of the places I went. I had toured the same route a month before, so in addition to seeing new people, I was seeing many of the same people I had seen a month before, and finding myself at the same food spots. It was like, “Oh, this is all so familiar—I feel like I live here.” I always have a good time on the West Coast—there's something special about it for me, maybe because it's so different from New York. But this tour, with Allison Crutchfield, will take me to a lot of new territory: New Orleans, Birmingham, Florida, Asheville. So I might have new favorites the next time we talk.

**Has seeing music spaces all over the country made you think about how we can make these spaces more accessible, more inclusive?**

I'm not sure that I have a formula. I think there are efforts being made. One of the things that I always keep in the back of my mind, or in the front of my mind, is that the more people there are that go against the archetype, the better. The more people who feel comfortable sharing their art, even though they're outnumbered or feel outnumbered, the better. It's important to be unable to be silent or pushed aside. The DIY community, the music community, is a lot like the real world. It has this appearance of alternativeness—that everyone who is the “other” rallies in this community and finds solace in it—but it's more complex than that. It's more complex than the clothes you wear, how you dye your hair, where you hang out.

You can say that DIY has a long way to go, but the world also has a long way to go. By “the real world,” I mean what's going on outside of this community. [DIY] is not all that alternative—the same systems exist there as in the outside world. I think that resistance against these systems can be approached by showing up, doing the work, being heard, and being visible. That's what I'm about. Despite what anyone thinks—not that I've heard anything crazy—I'm determined to make myself seen and make myself heard, even if people have opinions about it. Much like in the real world, you know?

**Do you feel you belong to more than one community?**

Absolutely. I'm a complex person—people are complex. Three years ago, this wasn't my world. I was in engineering school, working as a full-time engineer. I had a different life, a different background. I don't see myself as being defined as one thing, or fitting into one thing. [Who I am] is more about whatever happens and wherever I go, and whatever I want to do. It can be limiting to think someone has *one* thing going on.

**Has the current political climate, with Trump in office, affected your approach to music-making at all?**

It's hard to find the motivation to even get up and do things for the day. I think I'm dealing with it all just by listening to myself and doing the things that I obviously need to do, and be involved with. There are a bunch of organizations that could use donations right now, so I've donated to the ACLU and Planned Parenthood. But I know how incredibly hard it is for me not to take all of this stuff on personally. Sometimes all I require of myself is to listen to myself rather than being like, “I have to do this today,” or “I have to keep working.” And I'm someone who needs to constantly be working, so it's tough. ✱



# Dudes Need to Stop Being Assholes

MATT KORVETTE OF PISSED JEANS DISCUSSES TOXIC MASCULINITY



Illustration: Samuel Nigrosh

Romance and masculinity have been enduring fascinations for Philadelphia-based punk band Pissed Jeans, from their 2007 Sub Pop debut *Hope for Men* to the upcoming *Why Love Now*, out February 24. In advance of the band’s record release show at Brooklyn Bazaar that same night, we asked frontman Matt Korvette what contemporary straight men are getting wrong about relationships and other social behavior.

**Several of Pissed Jeans’ records explore the ins and outs of modern masculinity. What draws you to this topic?**

I’ve always been fascinated by myself, my motivations, and being a man. It’s probably a bit narcissistic, even if I’m being self-critical, but my lyrics for the band have pretty much always been based on things in my life that I’m actively pondering, curious about, angry about, or sad about. And my identity and how I fit into the world has always been a part of that. I also enjoy taking shots at guys and the generic vision of masculinity, since it’s a ripe target for criticism and I don’t think it gets nearly enough grief—especially from people who fit within it.

**You named *Why Love Now*’s first single “The Bar Is Low.” What did you mean by that?**

The song is a direct reaction to how, over the past couple years, both guys I admire and guys I dislike have revealed themselves to be men who have abused, assaulted, defrauded, or otherwise hurt other people. For a while it seemed like every week you’d find out that Actor X, Musician Y, or Local Friend Z had hit a woman while drunk, stalked a stranger on Twitter, or done something even more heinous.

I identify with straight white dudes, of course, and was trying to share this feeling of disappointment that I have. I would love if guys who looked like me and shared a similar background were using their privilege for good—if they were all out there kicking ass, helping people, and improving the world. But increasingly, there are times when it seems entirely like the opposite is true.

I have gotten props for *not* being one of those dudes, but the props feel undeserved. I don’t think I do much to make the world safer and better for people who could use the type of help I’m talking about. A lot of my time is spent selfishly and wasted, I’m sad to admit. It truly feels like the bar for straight white cis-guys is so low that all I have to do is not outwardly commit hurtful acts against other people to be considered one of the “good ones.” I’d love to actually *earn* that title, rather than receive it by default. I’m really trying to examine my own behavior, my own privilege, and how I fit into the world. And I really hope other guys are doing the same. I hope they can stop being total assholes.

**How would you describe typical asshole behavior?**

I’ve got a long way to go as a guy trying to act righteously and avoid the trappings of conditioned male superiority. In the context of what I’m talking about in “The Bar Is Low,” I’m referring to guys who use their privilege and power to hurt other people—to abuse women, to cause pain—with the thought that they’ll get away with it because of who they are. I feel like so much of it is conditioned, and that “toxic masculinity” is very much a real thing.

**How can the men of today stop being jerks?**

The moment I start speaking on The Ways Men Should Behave, I know I’ll be hypocritical in some way or another. Still, I think the key is to be aware of your behavior, to think about *why* you’re acting how you are—and why you’re coming to the decisions and conclusions you’re coming to. One thing that attracted me to punk rock as a 13-year-old was the way it questioned authority—the basic idea that you shouldn’t just take society and its values as truth—and I think applying that same sort of suspicion and evaluation to your own behavior is a good idea too, even if it can be difficult and painful. It’s a lot easier to yell “Fuck George Bush!” than it is to realize you never let your girlfriend listen to her CDs on the drive to school.

It ultimately comes down to asking yourself the right questions. Will I pressure this woman whose music I’m producing to go to bed with me, or will I respect her like I would a male artist? Will I credit her with “female vocals” on my album, or will I simply call them “vocals”? When it comes to questions of race, it’s not up to people of color to figure out a way to fix racism; it’s up to white people to figure out how to stop being racist. Dudes need to figure out how to stop being assholes. It shouldn’t be up to non-men to figure out how to deal with it.

**Any parting advice for guys trying to navigate love and romance in 2017?**

Stop playing video games, don’t comment on anything online, read a book, work out (your core in particular), go vegan, take up as little personal space as possible, be quiet, and listen to people with less privilege than you. I also highly recommend getting a vasectomy: great way to immediately cut your carbon footprint and demonstrate your willingness to shoulder the burden of birth control. True love will find you. ✱

# Prom For People Who Hate Prom

BY MARIA SHERMAN



Illustration: Samuel Nigrosh

**THE HIGH SCHOOL TRADITION DOESN’T ALWAYS HAVE TO SUCK. HERE’S HOW MARIA SHERMAN FLIPPED IT INTO A CELEBRATION OF FEMALE-IDENTIFYING ARTISTS**

I never went to my high school prom. My boyfriend at the time and I thought we were too alternative to take part in such an antiquated ritual, so instead, we took a train 40 minutes to see Portugal the Man perform in a packed warehouse. It was my first time having a partner I could feasibly invite to something like that, but going to prom never crossed my mind. Prom was for normies, after all. I didn’t think I was missing out on much.

As an adult, I’m still not big on traditional heteronormative practices, but I *am* a fan of coopting uncomfortable relics of the past and creating something new and exciting. Obviously, when it comes cultural appropriation, there is a line. I’m talking about the inverting-McDonald’s-logos-for-band-merch type of appropriation, not the insensitive cultural kind. Fucking up prom made sense to me.

The first Indie Pop Prom I put on, in 2013, was probably the most successful: a bill full of friends at the now-defunct 285 Kent. The Pains of Being Pure at Heart headlined, with Swearin’, Waxahatchee, Potty Mouth, and Weed Hounds supporting. The *New York Times* covered it, and I’m proud of the headline to this day: “Independent Women Celebrate Genres That Never Went Away.” People actually dressed up—and many said it was much more fun than their actual prom.

I can’t remember exactly why we decided to make it an annual thing, though I’m sure AdHoc’s Ric Leichtung is the man to blame for that fantastic idea. In any case, it became bigger than my initial vision, which was pretty straightforward: I wanted to book a show around my birthday, because I wanted my friends to come hang out with me, and I wanted a bill full of women. It seemed like the audience was in agreement with the latter ambition; they wanted to dress up for a silly night on the town, and they wanted to support the female musicians who were making some of the most exciting music around.

The next year, following the shuttering of 285 Kent, Indie Pop Prom moved to Baby’s All Right. The Crutchfield sisters reunited their old project Bad Banana for the gig—a kindness I won’t soon forget. Places to Hide, a band with whom I’d only corresponded via email, drove over 700 miles from Atlanta to play. Pity Sex traveled about the same distance, but from

Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Perfect Pussy played under the false name “Traitor Bitches.” In its third year, Indie Pop Prom returned to Baby’s; DC’s Priests headlined, with some help from Amanda X and Mannequin Pussy from Philly, and Leggy and Sports from Ohio. Last year, Indie Pop Prom moved to Market Hotel, and hosted Allison Crutchfield, New York’s Eskimeaux and WALL, and Philly/LA’s Pouty.

What makes these lineups unique—and why they should be viewed in their totality—is not simply the spectrum of genders and sexualities they represent, but how the acts interact with one another. A lot of the bands that play Indie Pop Prom are already friendly with each other, and see it as an annual reunion. Others form new friendships, and the same is true for the people in the audience. I’ve traveled all over the country and have heard people talking about the night as though it were a festival, or some other event way more massive than a single show. The ambience skirts the line between a gig and a party—presented in a safe space, where the only real aspiration is to make memories. I think a lot of people attend just to dress up and celebrate prom on their own terms, though I hope those people also leave with a new favorite band.

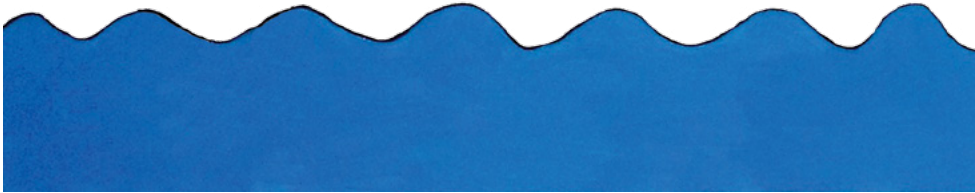
This year is special: I’ve relocated to Philadelphia and taken the show with me, so that Indie Pop Prom now comprises two nights, one in each of the East Coast cities. The Pains of Being Pure at Heart and Sports have returned, joined by Sad13 on both days. In Philly, the openers are local: Swanning and Mercury Girls. So are the ones in New York: T-rextasy and Half Waif.

For the first time ever, Indie Pop Prom is also a benefit show, with proceeds going to the Pink Fund, an organization that offers financial assistance to breast cancer patients. The cause reflects the feminine focus of the event, but it came to me after my mom was diagnosed, on Halloween in 2016. We’re lucky enough to have insurance, and while it’s a burden, it’s one my family can afford. Others aren’t so lucky, and with Trump in office, women’s healthcare doesn’t seem like it’s going to get easier any time soon. Now, in addition to being personally and politically meaningful, I’m proud to say that Indie Pop Prom is going to help people. That’s something high school prom doesn’t offer anyone. ✱



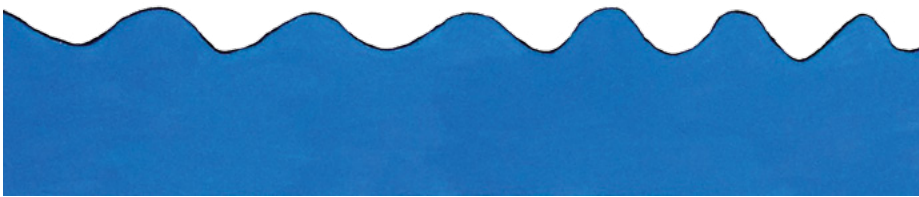
# Upcoming AdHoc Shows

02/08	Code Orange, Youth Code, Nicole Dollanganger, Vein, Jukai @ Marlin Room at Webster Hall
02/09	Allison Crutchfield & The Fizz, Radiator Hospital, Pinkwash @ Sunnyvale
02/09	Black Marble, Uniform, YOU. @ Brooklyn Bazaar
02/10	Dis Fig, Dreamcrusher, Sharp Veins, Soda Plains, STUD1NT, VHVL, Yatta @ Knockdown Center
02/10	Wild Pink, Active Bird Community, Alex Napping, Bodega @ Alphaville
02/11	Alexander F, Total Slacker, Exhibition, Really Big Pinecone @ Baby's All Right
02/11	Antarctigo Vespucci, Sammus, Worries, Weird Skin @ Villain
02/16	Tancred, Lilith, Vasudeva, Yucky Duster @ Alphaville
02/16	Teen Daze, Mozart's Sister, Rusalka @ The Silent Barn
02/17	Lemuria, Cayetana, Mikey Erg @ Brooklyn Bazaar
02/17	Rick Astley, Harry Kipner @ Webster Hall
02/17	Gaika (soundsystem), Yves Tumor, Bill Kouligas, James Ferraro, MHYSA @ Trans-Pecos
02/18	PWR BTM, Mal Blum and the Blums, Naked Giants @ Knitting Factory
02/21	Naomi Punk, PC Worship, Maria Chavez @ The Park Church Co-op
02/21	Homeshake, True Blue (early) @ Baby's All Right
02/21	Homeshake, True Blue (late) @ Baby's All Right
02/22	Homeshake, gobbinjr, Triathlon (solo) @ Sunnyvale
02/23	Homeshake, Brandon Can't Dance, Beastie Vee @ The Silent Barn
02/23	Horse Lords, The Dreebs, Leila Bordreuil @ Alphaville
02/23	The Internet @ Webster Hall
02/23	Baked, Honduras, Grass is Green, Hound @ Shea Stadium
02/24	Pissed Jeans, Latchkey Lights, Weeping Icon @ Brooklyn Bazaar
02/24	Vagabon, Mal Devisa, Jelani Sei @ Baby's All Right
02/24	Shadow Band, Pat Noecker, Boon, John Markowski @ Alphaville
02/25	Benefit Concert for Bruce Langhorne @ Brooklyn Music School
02/25	The Pains of Being Pure at Heart, Sad13, Sports, Half Waif, T-Rextasy @ Brooklyn Bazaar
02/27	Os Mutantes @ Marlin Room @ Webster Hall



03/01	You Blew It!, All Get Out, Free Throw @ Brooklyn Bazaar
03/02	Power Trip, Iron Reagan, Concealed Blade, Krimewatch @ Marlin Room at Webster Hall
03/02	Caracara, Weller, Petite League, Adore Acevedo @ Alphaville
03/03	Chain of Flowers, Bambara, Blank Spell @ Sunnyvale
03/03	A Place to Bury Strangers, Oneida, Yvette @ Villain
03/03	Bellows, Big Ups, Fits, Yucky Duster @ Alphaville
03/05	Anvil, Night Demon, Gravesshadow @ The Studio at Webster Hall
03/08	Landlady, Casey Dienel, Monsters of Brooklyn @ The Silent Barn
03/09	Foxing, Yohuna, Oyama, Snail Mail @ Brooklyn Bazaar
03/09	Parlor Walls, The Dreebs, Arian Shafiee @ Sunnyvale
03/10	The Funs, Shellshag, Kraus @ Alphaville
03/10	Kevin Abstract, Bearface @ The Studio at Webster Hall

03/11	Hans-Joachim Roedelius, Forma @ Villain
03/11	Noveller, Egyptrixx, Eartheater @ Saint Vitus Bar
03/16	Devendra Banhart @ Webster Hall
03/22	Chris Farren, Katie Ellen, Timeshares @ Saint Vitus Bar
03/22	Nouvelle Vague, Liset Alea @ Webster Hall
03/23	Palm, Shimmer, Beth Israel, Jepeto Solutions @ Sunnyvale
03/23	Pontiak @ Alphaville
03/24	Allah-Las, The Babe Rainbow, Roya @ Webster Hall
03/25	Dude York, Paws @ Knitting Factory
03/25	Rabit (live), Moor Mother, Geng @ Sunnyvale
03/27	Living Body, Dan Friel, Birthmark @ Alphaville
03/28	Minus the Bear, Beach Slang, Bayonne @ Webster Hall
03/29	Jay Som, The Courtneys @ Baby's All Right
03/31	King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, ORB, Stonefield @ Webster Hall



04/02	Selector Dub Narcotic, This Saxophone Kills Fascists @ Babycastles
04/05	Xylouris White @ Trans-Pecos
04/06	Xiu Xiu, Dreamcrusher @ Brooklyn Bazaar
04/06	Pile, Mannequin Pussy, Fern Mayo @ Baby's All Right
04/06	Half Waif @ The Silent Barn
04/06	Inga Copeland @ Knitting Factory
04/07	Diet Cig, Daddy Issues (early) @ Baby's All Right
04/07	Diet Cig, T-Rextasy (late) @ Baby's All Right
04/07	Vundabar, Horse Jumper of Love @ The Silent Barn
04/07	Pile, Stove, Grass is Green @ Sunnyvale
04/08	Las Rosas, Saint Pé, Roya, Breanna Barbara @ Baby's All Right
04/08	Oathbreaker, Sannhet, Jaye Jayle @ The Studio at Webster Hall
04/08	Peter Silberman @ The Park Church Co-op
04/11	Princess Nokia @ Brooklyn Bazaar
04/12	Swet Shop Boys @ Webster Hall
04/13	Entrance @ Alphaville
04/14	Pharmakon @ Brooklyn Bazaar
04/16	Lithics @ Alphaville
04/20	Helltrap Nightmare: The Hags Return @ The Silent Barn
04/22	Wolf Eyes @ Brooklyn Bazaar
04/27	HAUX @ Baby's All Right
04/28	Joakim @ Knitting Factory



05/18	Rex Orange County @ Sunnyvale
05/18	Highly Suspect @ Webster Hall
05/24	The Pixies, Cymbals Eat Guitars @ Webster Hall
05/24	Conan, North @ Knitting Factory